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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# *Central Intelligence Bulletin*

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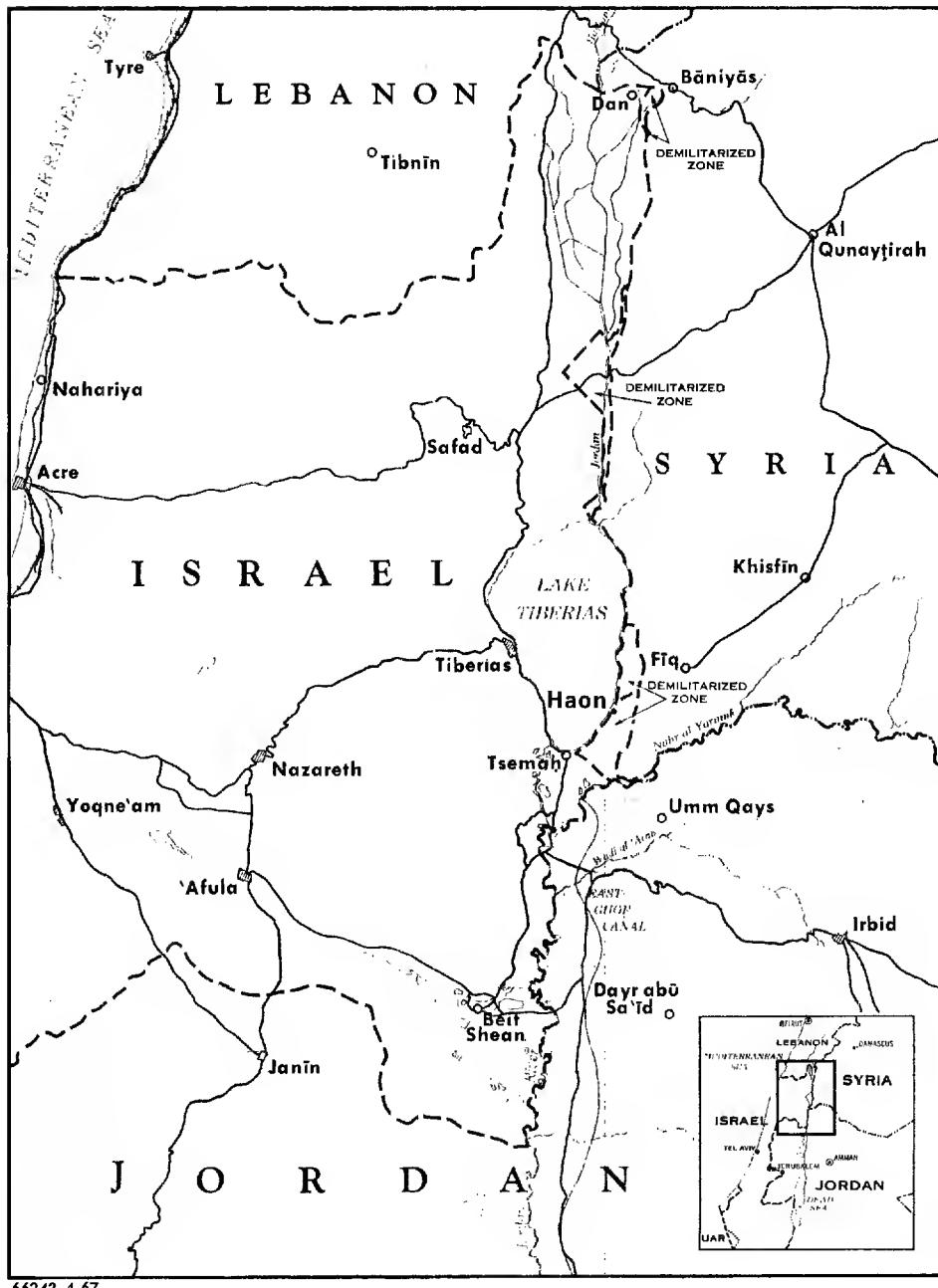
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Syria-Israel: Early resumption of fighting on a major scale appears unlikely, following Israeli success against the Syrian Air Force yesterday.

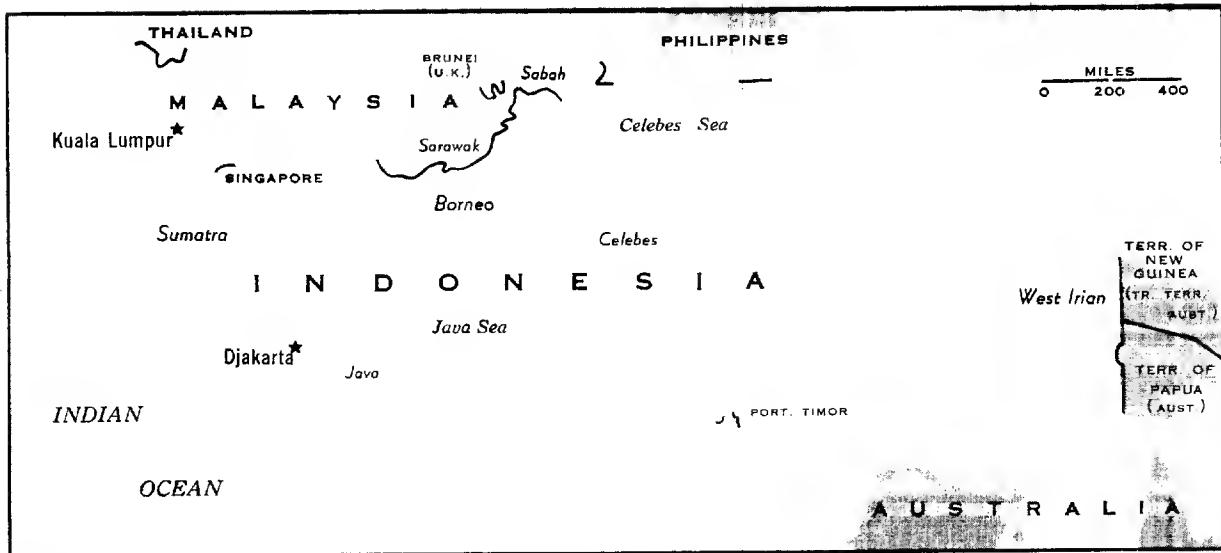
Israeli officials claim that seven Syrian MIG-21s were downed by Israeli Mirage fighters during a six-hour battle involving ground and air forces. The clash began yesterday morning when Syrian troops opened fire against Israeli armored tractors working fields near the village of Haon on Lake Tiberias. This area is in the demilitarized zone where the Israelis and the Syrians have been engaged in a dispute over cultivation "rights."

After the Syrians escalated to tank and mortar fire, both sides scrambled jet fighters. The air clashes may have extended as far as Damascus, 70 miles to the north-east, where eyewitnesses reported a dogfight over the city. The Syrians claim to have downed five Mirages and admit losing four MIG fighters. According to press reports, three of the downed Syrian aircraft fell into Jordanian territory.

Early efforts by UN truce observers to halt the fighting were unsuccessful, and mortar fire continued for several hours. Israeli Foreign Minister Eban took steps to enter a complaint in the Security Council after hostilities died down. The Syrian chief of state has proclaimed that Syria will keep shooting until she has "paid Israel back."

While further border clashes may occur, it is unlikely that either side will deliberately seek another major engagement. The Israelis probably believe they have proved their military superiority, and the Syrians probably will be reluctant to invite Israeli retaliation on yesterday's scale.

Cairo will almost certainly give Damascus ample propaganda support, but the Syrians are unlikely to attract any meaningful help from their Arab friends.



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Malaysia: Elections beginning today in the northern Borneo state of Sabah will help pave the way for restoring diplomatic relations with Indonesia.

Djakarta has indicated that it will consider these elections for the state Legislative Assembly as providing an adequate reflection of the attitude of all northern Borneo--including Sarawak--on remaining an integral part of Malaysia. The results are certain to be favorable to Malaysia, for all of the participating parties belong to the local branch of Malaysia's ruling coalition and have subscribed to a manifesto calling for Sabah to remain in Malaysia.

The elections, which will be concluded on 30 April, are being observed by representatives from Indonesia and several other Asian nations. The Philippine Government, which still claims part of Sabah, refused to send observers for fear of prejudicing its claim.

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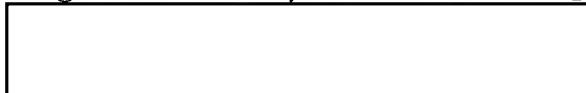
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NOTES



South Arabia: The British, who tried to avert the abrupt departure of the UN mission from Aden yesterday, still hope to salvage something of the UN's role in South Arabia and have invited the group to London. The mission's task had been made almost impossible by its terms of reference, which kept it from dealing with the local government, and by the refusal of nationalist groups to confer. Meanwhile, the nationalist Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen has called off the general strike, which has been paralyzing Aden.

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